



# Gloucester County Nature Club

## Monthly Newsletter

[www.gcnatureclub.org](http://www.gcnatureclub.org)

Nature Club meetings are open to the public

April 2014

### **Program: Costa Rica: A World of Nature**

**Thursday, April 13, 2014 at 7:00pm at the Wenonah Community Center, Wenonah, NJ (directions below)**

**Presenter: Marilyn Henry**

**Program Coordinator: Rich Dilks 856-468-6342**



Birds? Yes, the birders in the group recorded 173 species, but Costa Rica has so much more than birds- butterflies, bats, ants, monkeys, sloths, caimans, iguanas, turtles, frogs and snakes! Add in beaches, rivers, cloud forests, volcanoes and an earthquake. Also, cacao, coffee, pineapple and banana plantations. Travel from the Caribbean to the Pacific coast, and experience much of what Eco-friendly Costa Rica has to offer. A photo presentation shows the highlights of this adventure.

Although smaller in area than Lake Michigan, Costa Rica is a nation of incredibly natural beauty and diversity with 52 species of hummingbirds, 1,000 species of orchids, 20,000 species of spiders and 10% of the world's population of butterflies. Costa Rica is a peaceful nation (It abolished its army in 1949) with strong democratic traditions and has preserved 25% of its land area in national parks and protected areas.



In December 2011, GCNC member and Wenonah resident, Marilyn Henry presented a program for us on her amazing experiences as a member of a birding expedition to the island nation of Cuba. Tonight Marilyn has kindly agreed to share with us her adventures in the extraordinary World of Nature that she found in Costa Rica.

**Directions:** The Wenonah Community Center (historic train station) is located at the RR crossing at the corner of E. Mantua Avenue and N. East Avenue, Wenonah, NJ. **From the east, north or south**, take Woodbury-Glassboro Rd (Rt. 553), and turn west at the light onto Mantua Avenue. The Community Center is approximately 1/2 of a mile ahead on the right (at the railroad crossing). **From the west**, take Wenonah Ave. in Mantua east for approximately a mile (becomes Mantua Ave. when you enter Wenonah) to the RR crossing. The Community center is on the left. There are small parking lots near the Community Center along East Ave and West Ave, plus additional parking is available along the surrounding streets.

### **Field Trips – Various Bird Quest Training Sessions**

This month we hold a series of Bird Quest Training Sessions at various locations throughout the county. Feel free to attend any or all of them, even if you can't attend Bird Quest. Training sessions are listed at the end of this newsletter.

## **Field Trip Report- Black Run Preserve, 3/16/14**

The GCNC recently sponsored a field trip to Evesham's Gem, Black Run Preserve. This 1,000 acre publicly owned tract of pristine pine land habitats lies on the western border of the Pine Barrens. The still pristine Black Run Preserve watershed (covering over one thousand acres) is an island of native Pine Barrens plants and animals surrounded by suburbia and only fifteen miles from Philadelphia. It is open for hiking, biking, bird watching and other passive recreation. Our guide for this trip was John Volpa, a member of Friends of Black Run Preserve. John took our group on a most enjoyable and informative walking tour of the Preserve. Highlights included visiting a majestic stand of Atlantic White Cedars rising out of a sphagnum bog and spotting some Lesser Scaups at one of the ponds. The hike took us through pristine Pine Barrens wetlands, bogs, and some uplands. To see some photos from this trip, check out the GCNC webpage or Facebook page.

## **Conservation Corner – Monarch Butterflies Drop, Migration May Disappear**

(Mark Stevenson, UPI)



MEXICO CITY - The number of Monarch butterflies wintering in Mexico plunged this year to its lowest level since studies began in 1993, leading experts announced last month that the insects annual migration from the United States and Canada is in danger of disappearing. A report released by the World Wildlife Fund, Mexico's Environment Department and the Natural Protected Areas Commission blames the displacement of the milkweed the species feeds on by genetically modified crops and urban sprawl in the United States, as well as the dramatic reduction of the butterflies' habitat in Mexico due to illegal logging of the trees they depend on for shelter.

After steep and steady declines in the previous three years, the black-and-orange butterflies now cover only 1.65 acres in the pine and fir forests west of Mexico City, compared to 2.93 acres last year. They covered more than 44.5 acres at their recorded peak in 1995.

Because the butterflies clump together by the thousands in trees, they are counted by the area they cover.

The decline in the Monarch population now marks a statistical long-term trend and can no longer be seen as a combination of yearly or seasonal events, experts say. Lincoln Brower, a leading entomologist at Sweet Briar College in Virginia, wrote that "the migration is definitely proving to be an endangered biological phenomenon."

"The main culprit is now GMO herbicide-resistant corn and soybean crops and herbicides in the USA," which "leads to the wholesale killing of the monarch's principal food plant, common milkweed," Brower wrote in an email.

While Mexico has made headway in reducing logging in the officially protected winter reserve, that alone cannot save the migration, wrote Karen Oberhauser, a professor at the University of Minnesota. She noted that studies indicate that the U.S. Midwest is the main source of the butterflies coming to Mexico. "A large part of their reproductive habitat in that region has been lost due to changes in agricultural practices, mainly the explosive growth in the use of herbicide-tolerant crops."

While some gardeners and activists in the United States have started a movement to plant small patches of milkweed, the effort is in its infancy. Extreme weather - extreme cold snaps, unusually heavy rains or droughts in all three countries - have also apparently played a role in the decline.

It's unclear what would happen to the Monarchs if they no longer migrated. The butterflies can apparently survive year-round in warmer climates, but populations in the northern United States and Canada would have to face bitter winters. There is also another small migration route that takes the butterflies to California, but that has also registered declines.

The migration is an inherited trait. No butterfly lives to make the full round-trip, and it is unclear how they remember the route back to the same patch of forest each year, a journey of thousands of miles to a forest reserve that covers 193,000 acres in central Mexico.

Inhabitants of the reserve had already noted a historic change, as early as the Nov. 1-2 Day of the Dead holiday, when the butterflies usually arrive.

"They were part of the landscape of the Day of the Dead, when you could see them flitting around the graveyards," said Gloria Tavera, the director of the reserve. "This year was the first time in memory that they weren't there."

## **2014 Gloucester County Bird Quest: Saturday May 3, 2014**

The Gloucester County Nature Club and co-sponsors invite people of all ages to participate in the **2014 (15th annual) Gloucester County Bird Quest. This year Bird Quest will take place on Sat. May 3, 2014 from 7am to 12 noon throughout Gloucester County.**

We are pleased to return to Scotland Run Park (Wilson Lake) in Clayton for our picnic and gathering. We hope to reach new families and continue to excite our legacy participants with a wonderful setting for our picnic. Scotland Run Park is located at 980 West Academy St., Clayton, NJ 08312 (directions below).

**See the separate enrollment form.**

During this time, teams visit parks and natural sites in Gloucester County to find as many different bird species as they can. The Quest is:

- A way to discover Gloucester County's parks and natural areas
- A way to discover the unique birds that live in and through our county
- An opportunity to learn how to identify birds by sight, sound, behavior, and habitat
- An opportunity to have fun with family, friends, and colleagues
- A light-hearted competition

**The Quest is an educational event: novices are encouraged to participate.**

**How it works:** Teams have 5 hours on Saturday (7am to noon) to visit sites in Gloucester County. Birds are identified by sight or sound. The goal is to find as many different species of birds as possible. At noon, all participants gather at **Scotland Run Park in Clayton** to report results and for **(free) lunch, t-shirts, live bird show, owl interpretive center, and prizes.**

You can participate in one of the following ways:

- Form a team, plan your route (locations you will visit) for the day of the event and record all the bird species you see within Gloucester County. Hand in your results at Scotland Run by 12:30pm to be eligible for prizes.

- Join one of the buses lead by a bird expert. These buses will visit a few locations in the County where bird experts will help you to identify the many bird species. The buses will meet back at Scotland Run Park at 12:30pm.
- Join one of three guided walks, each lasting between an hour and an hour and a half, in various natural places in Gloucester County lead by a bird expert who will help you identify the bird species present. These walks will be paced and placed so you can participate in all of the walks or just one or two while you spend the rest of the time birding on your own. Hand in your results at Scotland Run Park at 12:30pm to be eligible for prizes.
  - **7:00-8:30: Maple Ridge:** From the intersection of Rt 553 (Woodbury-Glassboro Rd) and Mantua Ave in Wenonah (and Holy Nativity Lutheran Church), travel .75 mile south on Rt 553 to the intersection with Bark Bridge Rd. Turn right into the parking lot at that intersection – it should be open. We have permission from the landowner to be there -- please do not park at Hutchinson Cabinets.
  - **9:00-10:30: Chestnut Branch Park:** From Route 45 take 553A (Alternate) towards Sewell one and one half miles. The Park will be on your left. From Route 55 take exit 53 towards Wenonah. At the fourth light make a left towards Barnsboro. At the second light make a right onto Route 553A. The park will be on your right in about one mile. Park in the lower right gravel parking lot (you can cross over the walking path to get to the gravel lot).
  - **11:00-12:30: Scotland Run Park (also the picnic location):** From Route 55 take exit 45 and proceed North on Route 553/ Buck Road. After 1.2 miles turn Right on CR 610/ Clayton-Aura Road. Continue on CR 610 for 3.8 miles. After the traffic light at Fries Mill Road, turn Left into the parking lot for Scotland Run Park. You will meet in the bluebird field adjacent to the parking lot.

Last year's Gloucester County Bird Quest attracted participants from across the county organized in teams representing schools, scout troops, environmental commissions, families and friends. Each year the Club holds pre-Quest field and classroom trainings, attracting 15-30 persons each, in which local experts help new birders learn to identify birds by sight, sound, behavior, and habitat. The winning team in 2013 located 77 species but everyone was a winner because of how much they learned about birds and the natural areas of Gloucester County through this fun, educational event

**This year we will be celebrating 15 years of Bird Quest in addition to special activities. We have developed educational materials including a Quest t-shirt with original artwork featuring owls of Gloucester County.** Participants will learn about owls of Gloucester County and the unique features of these amazing birds. These materials will have lasting educational value for teachers, students, and the general public. Live birds, including owls, will be at the park. **The \$12 fee per participant helps to defray the cost of lunch, T-shirts, prizes etc.**

More information and registration forms will be posted to the Gloucester County Nature Club's website at [www.gcnatureclub.org](http://www.gcnatureclub.org). For more information, join a team or reserve a seat on the bus, contact Brian Hayes at [bhayes@eirc.org](mailto:bhayes@eirc.org) or 856.582.7000 x110.

Participants are encouraged to attend any of a series of free field trainings in the evenings, mornings and weekends before the Quest. Training sessions are listed at the end of this newsletter.

## Nature Notes

### Events by other Organizations: April 2014

- April 8, 2014 (Tuesday) 9:00 am - 4:00 pm **Gloucester County Horticultural Symposium** featuring Doug Tallamy, Author: Bringing Nature Home. Also: Art Walk “Garden Lunacy” and Jason Austin “Native Plants to the Pine Barrens. Reserve your spot today! Cost: \$45<sup>t</sup>. For more information contact Mary Cummings @ 856-307-6450, ext.1
- April 20, 2014 (Sunday), 2:00 pm – **Walk in the Wild: Mosses**. Sponsored by the Old Pine Farm Natural Lands Trust. Free. Experience a casual stroll on the trails of the land trust with a knowledgeable leader to observe the plants, animals, natural features and processes, and just plain magic that make this place very special. Meet in the parking area at the end of Rankin Avenue in Blackwood Terrace. Please check at [www.oldpinefarm.org/](http://www.oldpinefarm.org/) for changes to the schedule and directions. Or just use your favorite mapping program or your GPS by typing in "400 Rankin Ave, Deptford, NJ." Further details available by calling Carl Ford at 856-579-4441. We will do this on the third Sunday of each month, with a different focus each month.

**The following events take place at the Scotland Run Nature Center in Clayton.** For details and to register for programs, call the center at (856) 881-0845. All events are free.

- Bird Walk: Saturday 4/5 at 8:00 am. Bring binoculars and discover the many species of birds that call Scotland Run Park home.
- Nature Tots: Wednesday 4/9 at 10:00 am
- Afternoon Nature Stroll: Wednesday 4/16 at 2:30 pm
- Scout Saturday: Saturday 4/12 at 10:00 am
- Nature Explorer family program: Saturday 4/26 at 10:00 am

### Natural Events for the month of April

- Pond turtles emerge from hibernation and bask in the sun.
- Spring beauty, bloodroot, and trout lily bloom on the floor of deciduous woodlands.
- Spring peepers and wood frogs begin calling when vernal ponds warm to about 50 degrees F.
- Shad migrate up the Delaware River to spawn.
- Ruby-throated hummingbirds, purple martins, and warblers begin to arrive.
- Most juncos and white-throated sparrows have left by the end of the month.
- Rose-breasted grosbeaks show up at feeders for a few days before heading north.
- Prairie warbler, misnamed when it was first found in a barren area in Kentucky, returns late April – mid May.
- The peak of spring raptor migration is mid- to late-April. Consider a visit to a hawk lookout.
- Red-winged blackbirds return to marshes.

### **Looking Ahead:**

Listed below are the programs and field trips we have lined up for the rest of the season. Current schedule is subject to change. Meeting dates are the **second** Thursday of the month.

### **2013-2014 GCNC Programs**

May 8, 2014: **Spiders** - Eugene Fuzy

June 13, 2014: **Annual Picnic** – Chestnut Branch Park, Mantua Township

### **2013-2014 GCNC Field Trips**

April: **Bird Quest Trainings** including a junior birder training

May 3, 2014: **Bird Quest**

June 22, 2014: **Walk at Two Mile Beach Unit of the Cape May Wildlife Refuge**

### **Club Notes:**

- If you'd like to receive the newsletter electronically or receive more info about the club please email Karen Kravchuck at [president@gcnatureclub.org](mailto:president@gcnatureclub.org) or call 856-468-6536.
- The Nature Club is always looking for ideas for future programs and field trips. Please contact the program or trip coordinator if you have ideas or would like to help.
- Information for the next newsletter should be sent to Barry Bengel at [newsletter@gcnatureclub.org](mailto:newsletter@gcnatureclub.org) or GCNC Newsletter, PO Box 563, Sewell, NJ 08080 by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month.
- The March Executive Committee meeting will be held on April 6<sup>th</sup> at the home of Elaine Dzeima. Please contact Karen Kravchuck for more information.
- **Join Our Meetup Group!** The Gloucester County Nature Club is now using the online tool, Meetup.com to advertise our field trips. We strongly encourage you to give it a try. By signing up you will be able to see up to minute information related to field trips (weather, changes or cancellations if needed), communicate with the leaders and others going on trips of interest. Simply sign up with an email address to join the group and you will be informed of upcoming trips and Nature Club events. It's a great way to be reminded of the trips you didn't want to forget and meet new members! Check out the link and sign up!! <http://www.meetup.com/Gloucester-County-Nature-Club/>

## **Bird Quest 2014 Training Sessions**

### **April 5 (Saturday), 9:00 - 10:30 A.M. Jr. Birding at Alcyon Lake, Pitman**

This field trip is designed to introduce young birders to the "sport." We have binoculars that can be borrowed by all participants on this trip. We will enjoy all the birds, while teaching young birders how to locate and identify birds through binoculars and in field guides. This is a great first field trip for a child that is interested in birding. Depending on the age and size of the group of the birders we can divide the group by age or ability. This trip will be designed to be fun and engage children with the goal of Any level of interest is welcome. Questions are encouraged.

**Directions:** From Rt 55 Exit 53A (or Exit 53 if coming from the south) take Rt 553 (Glassboro Road) south for about 1.5 miles to Holly Avenue. Turn right (west) on Holly Avenue. Continue for 1.2 miles to the park entrance, which is on the left. There is a small sign. Drive past sports fields; meet at the pavilion.

**Leaders: Paula Hayes and Maria Keefe**

**April 19 (Saturday) 7:00 - 8:30 A.M. Forest/Edge Habitat. Chestnut Branch Park, Mantua.**

Find the hidden habitat in any location. This multiple use park has some great birding spots around and among the ball fields. Find species that like the edge like indigo buntings, mockingbirds, and yellow-rump warblers.

**Directions:** From the intersection of Rt. 45 (Broad Street) and Cooper Street in Woodbury, go south on Rt. 45 for 4.2 miles. Turn left (from right hand lane) onto Rt. 553Alt (Main Street) in Mantua. Go south on Rt. 553Alt for 1.6 miles. The park entrance will be on the left. There is a large paved parking area. Meet at the wildflower garden.

**April 21 (Monday) 6:00 – 7:30 P.M. Birding Basics. Alcyon Lake, Pitman.**

Learn the basics of good birding and the tools of the trade. Discover the world of birding from bird guides to binoculars, clothing to footwear, etiquette to bird song and of course bird identification as well. Any level of interest is welcome. Questions are encouraged. A walk around the park will let you use your newfound—or refreshed— skills.

**Directions:** From Rt. 55 Exit 53A (or Exit 53 if coming from the south) take Rt. 553 (Glassboro Road) south for about 1.5 miles to Holly Avenue. Turn right (west) on Holly Avenue. Continue for 1.2 miles to the park entrance, which is on the left. There is a small sign. Drive past sports fields; meet at the pavilion.

**Leaders: Rich Dilks and Karen Kravchuck**

**April 25 (Friday) 7:00 – 8:30 A.M. Woodland Birds and Birdcalls. Ceres Park, Mantua Twp.**

Learn your woodland birds like wood thrush, scarlet tanagers, ovenbirds, water thrush, black and white warblers, and pine warblers. Birds will be identified by sound, sight or both. **Directions:** From Rt. 322 take Lambs Rd (635) to Pitman-Barnsboro Rd (553Alt). Turn left onto Rt.553A. Watch for Ceres Park sign on your left after crossing over Rt 55.

**Leaders: Jayne Rhynard and Barry Bengel**

**April 26 (Saturday) 7:00 - 8:30 A.M. Forest Edge and Riparian Habitat. Triple Oaks, Franklinville**

Access to Scotland Run riparian habitat and forest edge at Triple Oaks.

**Directions:** Triple Oaks Nursery is on the right (west) side of Rt. 47 (Delsea Drive) half a mile south of the center of Franklinville.

**Leaders: Dwight and Doris Weir**

**April 27 (Sunday) 7:00 - 8:30 A.M. Forest Edge and Swamp Habitat. Railroad Avenue, Elk Township**

**Directions:** From Rt. 322 in Richwood turn at light onto Aura Rd. (Rt. 667.) Continue 3.5 mi. and turn Right onto Whig Lane Rd.(Rt. 619.) At fork stay Left. Pass Aura Elementary School and turn left into the Elk Township Recreational Complex.Park in the paved lot.

**Leaders: Ron and Linda Kegel**

**April 28 (Monday) 7:00 – 8:00 P.M. Birding by Ear — An Introduction to Birdcalls in a Classroom Setting. Wenonah Community Center, Wenonah**

In an indoor setting, learn mnemonics and “tricks of the trade” to identify birds by their songs and calls. This is a great session for novices and those that would like to brush-up on their “Birding by Ear” skills.

**Directions:** *Wenonah Community Center (Historic Train Station,) is located at the RR crossing at the corner of E. Mantua Avenue and N. East Avenue, Wenonah*

**Leaders: Brian Hayes and Erik Mollenhauer**

**April 29 (Tuesday) 7:00 -8 :00 A.M. Birds of Local Waterways. Old Pine Farm, Deptford**

Open views of the water provide good opportunity for sighting water birds like ducks, herons, red wing blackbirds and mergansers. Wooded section could produce woodpeckers, nuthatches, warblers, chickadees, and tufted titmouse. **Directions:** *Access from Good Intent road (Rt.534), turn North onto Rankin Ave. Follow to end and park. Walk down woods road to the Big Timber Creek.*

**Leaders: Ed & Millie Cleary; Gary and Margie Lizzi**

**April 30 (Wednesday) 6:00 - 7:30 P.M. Delaware River Riparian Habitat. Wheelabrator Refuge, Westville**

At the intersection of the Delaware River and Big Timber Creek, the wide-open space behind the Wheelabrator plant is great habitat for swamp, meadow and river birds. Trails and old roads make access easy and Wheelabrator is more than accommodating. Bob White can be heard here. **Directions:** *Access from Rt. 130, opposite Hazel Ave in Westville, just south of Big Timber Creek. Meet at the pavilion in parking lot on*

**Kris Mollenhauer and Marilyn Henry**